



The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of the District of Columbia

Welcoming Young & Old Alike to Join in Remembering the Past and Working for an Even Better Future

*The District's Oldest Civic Organization –
Founded December 7, 1865*

*Bulletin #99
October 7, 2011*

President's Message...

The District's War Memorial Should Remain Ours!

Little known to many DC residents were several attempts over the past couple of years to pass legislation on Capitol Hill which, among other things, would rename our War Memorial "The District of Columbia and National World War I Memorial." Thanks to member Joe Grano in bringing this to our attention, we have spent the better of part of our summer hiatus writing, testifying and encouraging our elected officials to stand up against this effort to *nationalize* our memorial.



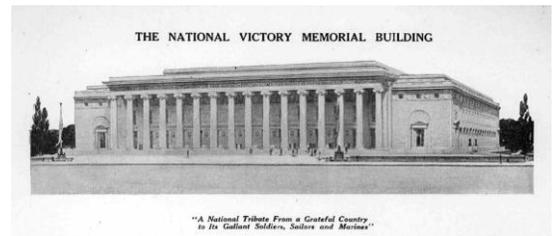
As a result, Congresswoman Norton introduced H.R. 346 to ensure our memorial to DC residents who served and were killed in the Great Conflict remains unchanged. Additionally, Joe Grano and Nelson Rimensnyder both testified before the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) against these Senate and House initiatives and, fortunately, the Commission agreed that the DC War Memorial should be left alone, conveying their findings to both affected U.S. Senate and House committees.

One of the features of these pending bills was to provide funds to rehabilitate the DC War Memorial; however, since the memorial has recently been restored with American Recovery Acts Funds, this part of the legislation is moot. (Cont'd. on Page 3)

October's Luncheon Event:

"Colossal Failure: The National World War I Memorial That Almost Was"

National Gallery of Art researcher and writer Mark Levitch discusses an early effort to establish a National World War I Memorial and why that effort never came to fruition



Please join us...

Friday, **October 21**, at the Channel Inn (free Parking) 650 Water Street, SW. (Maine Avenue via Metro Rail Green to Waterfront Station/SEU or Metro Bus 74 [Circulator Bus discontinued]), Social Time (cash bar) 11:45 a.m., Luncheon served at 12:30 p.m. (**\$22 per person** - please have your check completed prior to arrival and made payable to "AOI" or bring exact change).

Reservations are a must! Otherwise your food preference may be unavailable. RSVP to our voice mail **202-342-1865**, no later than noon Wed., Oct. 19, 2011.

This voice mail box number is the only means to make a reservation. Late reservations make planning very difficult for us and **failure by you to cancel prior to Noon on Thurs., 10/20, may result in you being charged.**

Please be prepared to leave your name, the number in your party, your guest's names for name tags, your meal preferences (Filet of Sole w/Scallops, Seafood Newburg, Chicken, Beef, Veggie Plate or Fruit Plate) and a telephone number where you may be contacted should we have a question or a last-minute cancellation.

Future Meetings...



The AOI's 146th Year – Meeting dates and tentative speakers:

Nov. 18, 2011 – Dr. Mark Ozer, “Massachusetts Avenue in the Gilded Age”; Annual Election of Officers & Directors

Jan. 1, 2012 – Annual New Year’s Day Reception, 11:30 – 2:30 PM at the Pier 7/Channel Inn

Feb. 17, 2012 – Gordon Brown, “The Captain Who Burned His Ships” – Commodore Tingey

March 16, 2012 – Elaine Flynn, “First Ladies and Their Hats”

April 20, 2012 – TBD

May 18, 2012 – Jim Johnston, “From Slave Ship to Harvard: Yarrow Mamout”

June 15, 2012 – TBD

NOTE: All meeting subjects and speakers have been invited to appear, but nevertheless are tentative. If our published RSVP line (202-342-1865) is not answering or appears out-of-order, please call 202-342-1638.

Remember: No luncheon meetings July/August nor December/January

Note: The Board of Directors meets at the Heurich House Museum at 10 a.m. on the Monday immediately prior to a scheduled luncheon meeting.

Be Advised: In case of inclement weather, the AOI follows the closing schedule of the Arlington County Public Schools or call AOI at 202-342-1865 for last minute information.

If You Were Not At Our Sept. Meeting...

President Bill Brown opened our first meeting following our summer break at the Channel Inn/Pier 7 Restaurant. Bill noted that this was the 6th meeting of the AOI's 146th year. There were 113 members and guests attending. Since notification for today's meeting was via postcard there was no newsletter sent. Consequently the draft of the minutes of the June luncheon meeting was placed at each table so that members could review them. **Lee Rogers** moved, seconded by **Mary Matson** that the minutes be approved as printed and the motion was accepted.

Bill announced there were five new applications for membership since the last meeting. The applicants are: **Helen Tsintolas** (membership suggested by an unknown 'historian' at her local FedEx Office); **Jayne Plank**, **George Gerber**, **Virginia Williams** (all nominated by Nelson Rimensnyder); and **Gene Ferris Benedict** (nominated by Jan Evans). **Alan Beach** moved that the applicants be accepted as members... seconded by **Cindy Janke**. The motion was approved enthusiastically.

Treasurer **Hulit Taylor** presented a brief report. There are now 350 members. Income from contributions is ahead of that from last year at the equivalent time. There were no non-routine expenses over the summer break and our investment fund decreased over the summer with the current financial trend.

Bill spoke of the important contributions to the Washington, D.C. community of **John Breen**, our former Fire Department Liaison. John passed away on September 10th. Ironically, he was honored by the AOI at our April meeting after 38 years as an AOI member and 37 years service to the D.C. Fire Department. John had recommended at that time that our DC Fire Department Liaison position be turned over to the other qualified member, **Jim Embrey**, who agreed to serve. On September 8th, one of John's daughters had phoned Bill to tell him that John had been hospitalized and wasn't

doing well and was expected to go into Hospice care in the next day or so; John, however, died on September 10th. His funeral was this morning (Sept. 16th). Carl and Rise Cole represented the AOI and a number of AOI members went to the viewing and to pay respect to him, his second wife Jane and his first wife Mary's 10 children. Four of his sons followed in John's footsteps as firefighters (all are retired now). Interment will be at Arlington National Cemetery at a future date. His daughter Maureen said that the Retired Firefighters' Association will try to arrange a funeral route that will take John's remains past the numerous fire stations where he served en route to Arlington Cemetery. Bill pointed out that all who ride Metro should thank John Breen every time they do so because John fought like a tiger to make sure that the Metro system was safe by insisting on having standpipes, escape routes and ladders, pedestrian walkways, fire-retardant seating, etc. Daughter Maureen told Bill that Metro had wanted to install comfortable polystyrene seats but John said that the passengers would suffocate from their toxic fumes before they even knew there was a fire. In fact at John's retirement from the Fire Department, a Metro representative came and presented him with one of the polystyrene seats as a 'safety tribute' to him, adding that if one wasn't enough, they had 15,000 more in a warehouse. Bill's masterful tribute honored the cherished memory of John Breen and his beloved family.

AOI Historian **Nelson Rimensnyder** offered another D.C. history challenge for the members. He was thinking of an event in 1926 wherein the Attorney General of the U.S. issued an order concerning the dress of women to be permitted in federal buildings. The answer, known by some, was that women would be allowed to wear pants in federal buildings including U.S. Embassies from then on. U.S. women ran with this one and never looked back.

Nelson reported that there will be an exhibit next month on the D.C. War Memorial honoring the nearly 500

District residents who died in the war and the 26,000 who served. Kwame Brown will sponsor a resolution for the D.C. Council to prevent our D.C. memorial from being taken for a national federal memorial for World War I. Bill said that **Joe Grano**, Nelson and he have worked to keep the D.C. memorial for D.C. and not have it designated as a National Memorial. Joe and Nelson have testified before the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission which has taken a position against renaming the memorial. Joe has advocated designating Pershing Park as a site to be a National World War I Memorial. Some people feel that it was the intent of Pershing Park from its beginning to be a national memorial, but no one owns up to this. Congresswoman Norton has asked the Congressional Research Service to research and determine the history of Pershing Park. Bill also announced that our October speaker will be **Mark Levitch** who will discuss the “World War I Memorial That Was Never Built.”

Our speaker today was **Garrett Peck**, author, historian and extremely knowledgeable authority on prohibition in Washington. His latest book is entitled, “Prohibition in Washington: How Dry We Weren’t.” The talk and book are both absolutely terrific. The material Garrett has researched is rarely brought forth so explicitly and in so entertaining a manner. Much of the basis of what went on rests on the sociology of cultures coming together and conflicting religious views on the consumption of alcohol. The presentation and book are loaded with anecdotal material, biographies of the leading protagonists, and political insights. It was an historical tour de force... and if you missed the talk, you should get the book. It’s a fun read!

Respectfully submitted.
Seymour Selig, Secretary



Please visit us at our web site at <http://www.aoidc.org> or simply “Google” Governor Shepherd and we’ll pop-up!

Our e-mail address is: aoidc@verizon.net

AOI is a member of Cultural Tourism DC:



President’s Message (Cont’d)...

But it would be short-sighted of us to just object to the re-designation of our memorial which has stood since 1931 (Nov. 11, 2011 is the 80th anniversary of its dedication) without offering an alternative. Joe Grano has proposed, and the AOI has supported, an initiative which would recognize what we know as Pershing Park (actually the American Expeditionary

Forces Memorial Honoring General John C. Pershing) as the National World War I Memorial. As Nelson and Joe learned



The park includes a prominent water feature.

during their testimony before the NCMAC, even members of the Commission, including representatives of the American Battle Monuments Commission were uncertain as to the intent behind the Pershing Park memorial... perhaps it *was* intended to be a national memorial to World War I. Congresswoman



The park features a statue of Gen. Pershing and inscriptions detail many of the war’s campaigns.

Norton’s office, at our urging, has requested the Congressional Research Service to research Congress’ intent.

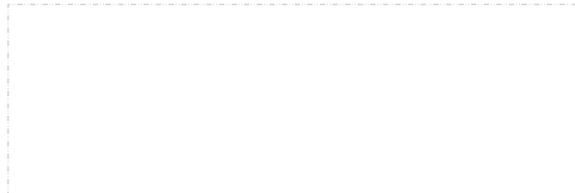
Certainly, you will want to stay on top of this issue with us as we continue to play an active part in this matter and we will notify our membership of developments as they occur.



As the memorial’s wall may look if it were redesignated the National World War I Memorial.

Address Correction Requested

The Association of the Oldest Inhabitants of D.C.
4425 Greenwich Parkway, NW
Washington, D.C. 20007-2010



Officers:

William Brown, President 202-342-1638
4425 Greenwich Parkway, NW, Wash., DC 20007
John Gill, Sr., Vice-president 202-338-5001
Seymour M. Selig, Secretary 301-292-1054
Hulit Pressley Taylor, Treasurer 202-625-0203
Nelson Rimensnyder, Historian 202-546-4668
Jim Embrey, F.D. Liaison 571-436-7774

Past President:

A. L. Wheeler 202-337-0030

Luncheon RSVP Voice-mail: 202-342-1865

Directors:

Carl Cole 202-889-8813
Damon Cordom 301-215-7022
Jan A. K. Evans 301-968-4749
John P. Richardson 703-534-3577
Sherwood Smith 202-686-4107
Leslie B. White 202-265-2560

◆ Help keep AOI alive and strong: invite friends to join and be sure to renew your membership!
◆ Peirce Mill Harvest Festival celebrating the mill's re-opening, Sat., Oct. 15, 10am-8pm.
Demonstrations, music, tours. www.peircemill-friends.org



The Heurich House Museum is the former home of the Historical Society of Washington and served as AOI's headquarters from 1956 until 2003.